Achievements of DRDO in non-strategic areas

2519. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that DRDO has made achievements in non-strategic areas; if so, has any report of such products been compiled by the DRDO; if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government received the report of an expert Committee regarding profile of DRDO; if so, what were the mandates and the constitution of such Committee;

(c) who were the stakeholders consulted by the Committee and have the verbatim records of its meetings been annexed with the Report, if not, the reason therefor; and

(d) has the Government taken a view of the Committee's recommendation in the context of DRDO's documentation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has made significant achievements in non-strategic areas. This is regularly reported through Chapter 8 of Ministry of Defence Annual Report.

(b) to (d) The report has been submitted to the Government on 5th March, 2008. The Committee constituted by the Government included members from Academia, Industry, three Services and from S&T Organizations with Member Secretary from DRDO. The mandate has been to suggest measures for improving the functioning of Defence R&D Organisation *inter alia* Ministry of Defence and Services. The stake holders consulted by the Committee included senior officers of DRDO, Ministry of Defence and S&T Organisations. The report is being studied by the Government.

Sponsoring of journalists' tour by MOD

†2520. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:
SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the tours of journalists are sponsored by the Ministry of Defence; and

(b) if so, the number of the journalists belonging to the print and electronic media sent on these tours during the last two years?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During the year 2006-2007, 304 Print and 197 Electronic Media journalists were taken by the Directorate of Public Relations, Ministry of Defence for coverage of various Defence events at home and abroad. During the year 2007-2008 the corresponding figures are 246 and 196 respectively.

Functioning of IMA and NDA below their capacity

2521. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Military Academy (IMA) and the National Defence Academy (NDA) are functioning much below their capacity;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, how the shortage of more than 11 thousand officers is going to be met so that our combat capabilities do not adversely affect nation's security; and

(c) is there any thinking about introducing conscription as one of the measure to enlist more officers and thereby fill up the growing gap?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) In the Indian Military Academy, a total of 1683 Gentleman Cadets are presently undergoing training against the existing capacity of 1650. The National Defence Academy also has been functioning to its full capacity except the first batch of 2008.

(b) Several steps have been taken by the three Services to attract more talented youth to join the Defence Forces. All officers including those in Short Service Commission (SSC) have been made eligible to hold substantive rank of Captain, Major and Lieutenant Colonel and equivalents after 2, 6 and 13 years of reckonable service respectively. The tenure of SSC Officers has been extended to 14 years in the three Services. Armed Forces have undertaken sustained Image projection and publicity campaign to create awareness among the youth on the advantages of taking up a challenging and satisfying career. Awareness campaigns, participation in career fairs and exhibitions, advertisements in print and electronic media, motivational lectures in schools and colleges are also some of other measures in this direction.

(c) Presently there is no such proposal.

Delay in procurement of deep-submergence rescue vessels

2522. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that procurement of two deep-submergence rescue vessels approved in November, 2002 for the Indian Navy is still pending;

(b) if so, how trapped sailors in a disabled submarine deep under water or sinking to the bottom of the sea, will be rescued to avoid a situation which resulted in slow death of 118 sailors on board the disabled Russian Nuclear submarine Kursk in the Barents Sea in August, 2000; and

(c) what is the present status of the procurement process?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) A fresh Request For Proposal (RFP) is to be issued for procurement of deep-submergence rescue vessles.

(b) The Navy operates Indian Naval Ship (INS) Nireeksahk (Diving Support Vessel) which uses a rescue bell to rescue personnel within its designed parameters from a submarine in distress. The option for a global partnership for such rescue is also available.

(c) The Request For Proposal (RPF) is under formulation.

Acquisition of ageing US Naval Ship

2523. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Navy acquired an ageing foreign ship from the U.S. Nevy after refurbishment at a cost of $50.63 million without physical assessment of the ship;